

NUTRITION IN A NELLSTAR CARE HOME - FORTIFICATION

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In this week's blog I would like to take you behind the scenes to look at how we support those in our care who might need help to gain or maintain weight.

When a person is of a healthy weight they tend to better recover from illness or surgery and are slightly more resilient than those who are under or very overweight.

Addressing weight loss

Weight loss can be common in older generations because of illness or a loss in appetite due to living at home alone or having experienced extended time in hospital. If either situation has occurred a person might come to a **Nellsar Care Home** for respite or to live permanently and can sometimes arrive with us underweight.

Within the first stages of arrival at a **Nellsar Home**, we assess the **resident's weight and BMI** to check if they are underweight and might require some extra calories in their diet to help them to maintain or to build up and gain some pounds.

Food preferences and fortification

The first thing our teams establish are **personalised food preferences** and offer small portions of a person's favourite foods to help them build an appetite.

When a person requires extra calories in their diet, we use something known as **food first fortification**. This means that we add in extra calories to meals for those who need to gain weight by using calorie-rich foods.

For example:

50Kcal toppings/additions	Add to
1 level tablespoon of butter / margarine (7g)	Main course, soups, vegetables, starchy foods
1 teaspoon of oil (5g)	Main course, soups, vegetables, starchy foods
2 level tablespoons of double cream (10g)	Soup, mash, porridge, desserts, with cakes, with fruit
1 level tablespoon of clotted cream (8g)	Soup, mash, porridge, desserts, with cakes, with fruit
½ level tablespoon of mayonnaise (7g)	Sandwiches, mash, vegetables
2 heaped teaspoons of cream cheese (12g)	Sandwiches, mash, pasta, rice, soups, vegetables, omelettes, potatoes
12g of cheddar cheese	Mash, potatoes, soups, vegetables
2 heaped teaspoons of sugar (13g)	Porridge, puddings, yoghurts, tinned or fresh fruit, milky drinks, in cups of tea or coffee throughout the day
2 heaped teaspoons of honey/golden syrup (17g)	As above
3 heaped teaspoons of skimmed milk powder (15g)	Milk, and therefore with cereals, in custard, white sauces, milk puddings, soups, <i>See fortified milk recipe</i>

(NHS Nutrition and Hydration resource pack for care homes 2017)

Vegan diets

You will notice that much of the fortification advice here is very **dairy heavy**. We recommend dairy-free options for those who are vegan or have a dairy intolerance or allergy.

Vegans do not eat eggs, dairy products or honey, and many of the food items commonly used to fortify food may not be suitable. Useful plant-based alternatives are illustrated below:

How to fortify vegan meals:

Food	Measure	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
Soya protein	30g	126	27
Pea protein powder	30g	107	23
Peanut butter	25g	152	6
Higher protein soy yoghurt	125g	89	8
Soya yoghurt	125g	63	5
Creamed Coconut	15g	105	1
Vegan mayonnaise	15g	66	0
Cream cheese alternative	20g	48	0
Syrup	15g	45	0
Vegetable oil	Tsp	25	0
Dairy free spread	5g	25	0
Soya cream	15g	23	0

(NACC Menu Planning and Dining in Care Homes page 60)

Person-centred Nutrition at Nellsar

Much of my job as a Nutrition Specialist in Care is to think outside the box and find solutions to support a person's individualised health and well-being.

If a resident might need support with their diet due to weight loss, but is not yet eligible for a GP or dietician referral, then our Nellsar staff can contact me at any time to make an assessment or to advise on methods of support for those with extra nutritional needs.